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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

CONCERNING

GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY

TOGETHER WITH

HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

1876.

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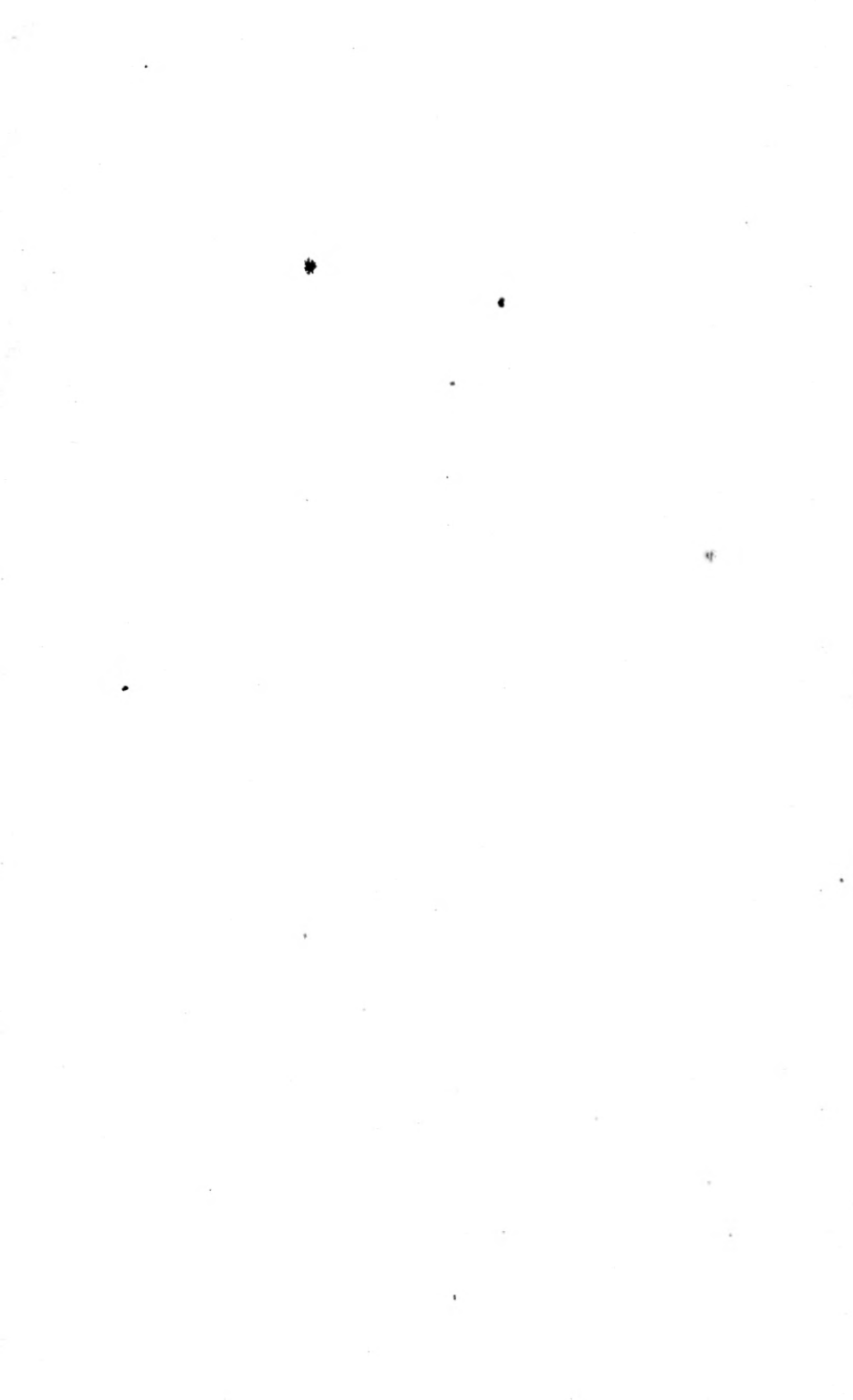
GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY

TOGETHER WITH

HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

1876.

"News" Book and Job Printing House, Main Street, cor. Garden, Poughkeepsie.



THE letters published in this paper, and the biographical notes concerning General Montgomery, written by Mrs. Montgomery, have been carefully transcribed from the original manuscripts.

L. L. H.

MONTGOMERY PLACE,

November 10, 1876.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES
CONCERNING
GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY:

WITH
Unpublished Letters and Manuscripts.

Among that small band of military leaders who shared the perils of our early struggle for independence, the name and fame of Richard Montgomery should be held especially dear by the people of New York. He has now been dead a hundred years, yet during that period but one short biography of him has been written; and although his memory is still revered by the American people, little is generally known of his personal history. Few and meagre are the materials left to aid us in attaining accurate knowledge other than that contained in the public records of his day. What we have found is nevertheless of value, from the fact that in these hitherto unpublished documents, the prominent characteristics of General Montgomery appear strongly marked throughout; and every anecdote and tradition, every letter, however trifling, contains proofs of his keen love of justice, of his unwavering devotion to liberty, of his indomitable will and courage, and of his abiding sense of duty.

It is not the province of the writer of this article to discuss the professional merits of General Montgomery, or even to attempt any consecutive narration of his campaign in Canada. To string together the accounts that have been furnished by the letters and manuscripts preserved at Montgomery Place, to present these fragmentary but authentic papers to the public in entire form, and to bring the reader into closer acquaintance with the hero of Quebec,—such is our purpose.

General Montgomery was by birth an Irishman. In his youth he served in the British army, during the French and Indian War. Always an ardent lover of liberty, he had a great admiration for republican institutions. Perhaps, while he served with honor in the British army, his Irish blood may have inclined him to be restive under British rule. Be this as it may, on his return to England, after the close of the seven years' conflict, he is said to have formed friendships with Fox, Burke and Barré, becoming deeply imbued with their views of the rights of the Colonies. Superseded and disappointed in the purchase of a majority, he quitted England forever, to make this country the home of his adoption.

While still a Captain in the British army, Montgomery had met Janet Livingston, the daughter of Robert R. Livingston, one of the Judges of the King's Bench. He was on his way to a distant post and had come on shore with all the officers of his company at Clermont, Judge Livingston's country place on the Hudson. Subsequently when he returned to settle in America, he renewed his acquaintance with her, and with the consent and approbation of her parents, married her, in July, 1773. Among the papers before us are the letter of Montgomery to Judge Livingston, asking for the hand of his daughter, and Judge Living-

ston's reply. This correspondence shows the stately steps by which matrimony was approached in the olden time.

"KINGSBRIDGE, MAY 20TH, 1773.

"SIR:—Though I have been extremely anxious to solicit your approbation, together with Mrs. Livingston's, in an affair which nearly concerns my happiness and no less affects your daughter, I have, nevertheless, been hitherto deterred from this indispensable attention by reflecting that from so short an acquaintance as I had the honor to make with you I could not flatter myself with your sanction in a matter so very important as to influence the future welfare of a child. I therefore wished for some good-natured friend to undertake the kind office of giving a favorable impression; but, finding you have already had intimation of my desire to be honored with your daughter's hand, and apprehensive lest my silence should bear an unfavorable construction, I have ventured at last to request, sir, that you and Mrs. Livingston will consent to a union which to me has the most promising appearance of happiness, from the lady's uncommon merit and amiable worth. Nor will it be an inconsiderable addition to be favored by such respectable characters with the title of son, should I be so fortunate as to deserve it. And if to contribute to the happiness of a beloved daughter can claim any share with tender parents, I hope hereafter to have some title to your esteem.

"I am, sir,

"With great respect,

"Your most obedient servant,

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

"CLAREMONT, 21ST JUNE, 1773.

"SIR:—I received your polite letter by the hands of Mr. Lawrence at Poughkeepsie, from whence I returned last night.

"I was there so engaged in the business of Court, both night and day, that I had no time to answer it, and tho' I would have stolen an hour for that purpose, it required a previous consultation with Mrs. Livingston.

"Since we heard of your intentions, solicitous for our daughter's happiness, we have made such enquiries as have given a great deal of satisfaction. We both approve of your proposal and heartily wish your union may yield you all the happiness you seem to expect, to which we shall always be ready to con-

tribute all in our power. Whenever it suits your convenience, we hope to have the pleasure of seeing you here, and in the meantime, I remain, with due respect,

"Y'r most humble servant,

"ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON."

Mrs. Montgomery wrote a series of notes to be used for a memoir of her husband. No part of her simple, accurate and quaint narrative can be omitted without loss.

———"General Montgomery traced his origin from that Count de Montgomery, who, unfortunately, in playing with foils with his King, Henry II. of France, wounded him in the eye, thus causing his death. For this mishap the Count was brought to the scaffold. His family afterwards went to the Low Countries. One of their descendants came to England with William, Prince of Orange, and commanded a regiment during the wars of Ireland, where, either by his prowess or his wealth, he owned three estates. General Montgomery was born in Dublin, and was educated in the College of Dublin. His father, Thomas Montgomery, of Donegall, had three sons, Alexander, John and Richard, and one daughter, married to Viscount Ranelagh. The eldest son, Alexander, was an officer under Wolfe, in the conquest of Canada, and for forty years member of Parliament for the county of Donegall. John died at Lisbon, a noted merchant. Richard was the third son. His mother was an English lady of fortune, whose estate was settled on her younger children, the eldest son having inherited the estate of his uncle. Richard was placed in the British army in the 17th regiment, by the advice of his brother Alexander, his senior by many years. He was at the taking of Cape Breton, with Amherst. The latter marched to reinforce Wolfe. He

used to say that his march from Albany under General Amherst was very severe. Amherst did not go to Quebec; when he heard of the victory he returned to New York. Lord Monckton, who was Colonel of the 17th Regiment, was then Governor of New York. The duty on this expedition was very severe. All the duty of this regiment was in America. For this reason, when the Stamp Act was to be enforced, order was given to employ that regiment, then in England, which Montgomery, receiving with several others, declared publicly that having lived so long in America, they would throw up their commissions if the order were persisted in.

“Montgomery had the promise of a majority in the year 1771, and had lodged his money for the purchase, when he was overlooked, and another purchased over him. This gave him a disgust for the service. He immediately sold out, and in 1772-3 came to New York, purchased a farm at Kingsbridge, and in July, 1773, was married. He then removed to Rhinebeck, where he built a mill and laid the foundation of a house.

“Unknown as his modesty led him to suppose himself to be, he was chosen, early in 1775, one of the Council of Fifty, to New York, from Dutchess County. Although he received this call with surprise, and left his retirement with no small regret, he hesitated not a moment. The times were dangerous, but he shrank not from the duties of a citizen. While thus engaged Congress determined to raise troops in defence of our rights. Philip Schuyler was appointed the Major-general, and the appointment of Brigadier-general was tendered to Montgomery. Before accepting it he came into his wife's room and asked her to make up for him the ribbon-cockade which was to be placed in his hat. He saw her emotion, and marked the starting tear. With persuasive gentleness he said to her: ‘Our

country is in danger. Unsolicited, in two instances, I have been distinguished by two honorable appointments. As a politician I could not serve them. As a soldier I think I can. Shall I then accept the one, and shrink from the other in dread of danger? My honor is engaged.'

"Mrs. Montgomery took the ribbon, and he continued: 'I am satisfied. Trust me. You shall never blush for your Montgomery.'

"On his departure he remained only a moment to bid Judge Livingston farewell, who said, 'Take care of your life.' 'Of my honor, you would say, sir,' was Montgomery's answer.

"In passing his own villa he said: 'I must not suffer myself to look that way.'

"He had hardly received this appointment when it was announced that General Washington was to pass through New York, on his way to Boston. On the morning of his expected arrival the whole town was in a state of commotion. All the militia was paraded, bells ringing, drums beating,—and in that moment the British Governor Tryon arrived. As he landed he looked with delight at the general excitement that prevailed, and said: 'Is all this for me?' When two of his counsellors took him mournfully by the hand, and led him to a house in Broadway, where he nearly fainted when he saw the great Washington pass, attended by a crowd of patriots! At a window, next to the City Hotel, I was happily so placed that I could see him. Here General Schuyler and General Montgomery received their commissions and instructions. General Montgomery told General Washington he wished he would allow him to go with him; to which Washington answered, 'Sir, you have more important business to attend to;—we trust everything to you.'

Washington's stay at New York was but a moment. He drove a sulky, with a pair of white horses; his dress was blue, with purple ribbon sash,—a lovely plume of feathers in his hat. All this was a most mortifying sight to Governor Tryon.

"The next day, when Montgomery opened his commission, he found all the commissions of his brigade left in blank. Such was the trust reposed in him.

"Plots were soon discovered, fomented by Governor Tryon and his counsellors. The committee determined to check them by confining the Governor; but General Montgomery took a milder course, and advised the Governor to embark again for England rather than be insulted in this country. This advice the Governor took that very night, and offered his best thanks to the General.

"A few days later, the accounts of the battle of Bunker Hill arrived. The papers had a deep black margin. Blood had been shed and the Americans had been beaten. Our house was filled with a crowd of long faces. General Montgomery met them with a smile of satisfaction. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'I am content. What I feared has not happened. The Americans will fight, and I am well pleased at this experiment.' The Tories, however, made a great uproar. Many ladies came to us for protection, and they had a thousand fears without occasion for any. No gentlemen offered to take commissions in the army. The mechanics alone offered, and General Montgomery accepted them without demur. When the brigade was filled several gentlemen came forward, but he refused them the places, telling them they should have been first, and were too late.

"The General left for Ticonderoga with four thousand men, but many left him and many sickened; many ran

at the shake of a leaf. One of these was named Quackenbosh, who was very bold until some attack was determined on, then he so frequently entreated for leave of absence, that General Montgomery said to some one passing by: 'I think this *quake-in-the-bush* had best be gone altogether.'

"Congress at three different times refused to accept General Montgomery's resignation. They continually promised him ten thousand men and always failed in their support. His patience was exhausted. The commander-in-chief, General Schuyler, was ill, causing weeks of delay in the campaign. When he arrived, they embarked immediately. On landing at Fort Chamblay, a gun was fired, and the Commander ordered the troops to retreat, when another attack of illness obliged General Schuyler to return home. The fort soon after surrendered. It was remarkable that the Commander of St. Johns was the very Major who had superseded General Montgomery in purchasing the majority.

"How Montreal surrendered is well known. That General Montgomery supposed it might have been better defended, is concluded from one expression of his. He said: 'I suffered the officers to pass my fort without notice. ' Because I had placed a few cannon on the bank—I blush for His Majesty's officers!—they actually preferred being made prisoners! Carleton has escaped, the more's the pity.' General Montgomery intended quartering for the winter at Montreal. His men were in rags and his provisions exhausted. He had written repeatedly for more troops and none were sent. Twice he sent in his resignation and twice it was refused. The wild march of Arnold up the Kennebec altered all the plans, and obliged Montgomery to sacrifice himself."

Here the MS. ends, much to our regret. It has the vitality which contemporaneous history finds in the journals of every day; a vitality vainly sought except from the pen of an eye-witness to the stirring events which move men's souls.

At the time of Montgomery's marriage, war was only dreamed of by the few who saw the storm in the distance. Studious in his tastes and habits, he earnestly wished for retirement. "Ambition," says Mrs. Montgomery, "seemed to have no part in him." He was exceedingly fond of country life. Books and the family circle with which he had connected himself constituted his happiness. He purchased a well-stocked farm and a mill; where, as his brother-in-law and biographer, General Armstrong, says, he prosecuted his new career of agriculture "with that combination of diligence and discretion which directed all his movements."

Two years of quiet and domestic happiness were broken in upon by Montgomery's being sent as a delegate from Dutchess County to the first Provincial Convention, held in New York in April, 1775. He never thought himself fit for civil service, and with reluctance took the place assigned him. But his heart was in the movement. With such feelings of ardent devotion did he give himself up to the cause of American liberty that, when called upon by Congress to quit the retirement of his farm in order to become one of the first eight brigadier-generals, he wrote to a friend, "that the honor, though entirely unexpected and undeserved, he felt to be the will of an oppressed people, which must be obeyed;" and he accordingly went immediately into active service.

Mrs. Montgomery accompanied him on his way as far

as Saratoga. In after-years their parting was described as follows, by his brother-in-law, Edward Livingston, who was at the time a boy of eleven: "It was just before General Montgomery left for Canada. We were only three in her room,—he, my sister, and myself. He was sitting in a musing attitude between his wife, who, sad and silent, seemed to be reading the future, and myself, whose childish admiration was divided between the glittering uniform and the martial bearing of him who wore it. Suddenly the silence was broken by Montgomery's deep voice, repeating the line, 'Tis a mad world, my masters.' 'I once thought so,' he continued, 'now I know it.' The tone, the words, the circumstances all overawed me, and I noiselessly retired. I have since reflected upon the bearing of this quotation, forcing itself upon the young soldier at that moment. Perhaps he might have been contrasting the sweet quiet of the life he held in his grasp, with the tumults and perils of the camp which he had resolved to seek without one regretful glance at what he was leaving behind. These were the last words I heard from his lips, and I never saw him more."

We turn next to the letters written by General Montgomery to his wife during his last brilliant and memorable campaign. The correspondence was not voluminous. Death soon put an end to it, and at that time communication between Canada and New York was slow and difficult. In the most favorable weather the sloops which plied the Hudson required a week to go from Albany to New York. General Montgomery's letters are but nine in number, and we have copied those that are of most interest for the benefit of our readers. On comparison of dates some of them prove to have been two months on the way from Montreal or other parts of Canada, to Rhinebeck, where Mrs. Montgomery lived.

"ISLE AUX NOIX, SEPT. 12TH, 1775.

"I am, my dear Janet, so exceedingly out of spirits and so chagrined with the behavior of the troops, that I most heartily repent having undertaken to lead them. I went down the river the other day with 800 or 900 men, in order to cut off the communication between St. Johns and Montreal. The detachment marched off from the boats at night, and in less than half an hour, returned in the utmost confusion, some little noise having been made by a few of our own stragglers in the bushes. They gave way near the front, and the panic spreading, they were like sheep, with some few exceptions,—nor can I say who behaved worst. With solicitation, entreaty and reproaches, I got them off again, and in less than an hour they came back, having behaved almost as infamously as at first. In their last excursion the advanced guard surprised a Canadian officer and some Indians in a hut; the officer and one Indian were killed, but the firing of two or three shot set the whole line a-firing without any object. The commanding officer, who was Ritzma, represented the impracticability of getting the detachment off. The next morning I tried again with as little success. In short, such a set of pusillanimous wretches never were collected. Could I, with decency, leave the army in its present situation, I would not serve an hour longer. I am much afraid the general character of the people has been too justly represented. However, there are some whose spirit I have confidence in; they are taking pains with the men, and they flatter me with hopes of prevailing on them to retrieve their characters. We were so unfortunate as to have some Canadians witnesses of our disgrace! What they will think of the *brave Bostonians*, I know not! My own feelings tell me they are not likely to put confidence in such friends. Shew this to your father only; it can't be of service to our common cause to make known our weakness. May I have better news to write hereafter!

"Adieu, my dearest Janet;

"Believe me most affectionately yours,

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

"ISLE AUX NOIX, SEPT. 5TH.

"MY DEAR JANET:—

"I take the earliest opportunity of letting you hear I am well. We have made an excursion to St. Johns with the small corps with which I left Ticonderoga. We found the enemy's vessel, which mounts sixteen guns, almost ready to sail. We had but

two pieces of artillery with carriages—by no means sufficient to undertake a siege, or to destroy the vessel, which is under the cannon of the fort. It has therefore been judged expedient by everybody to put in practice the first project of throwing a boom over the channel at the Isle aux Noix, which we are now about getting ready. We have not as yet received intelligence that can be relied on with respect to the intentions of the Canadians; but a Mr. Hazen, who lives at St. Johns, and is a sensible man, is of opinion that tho' they will not take up arms against us, yet they will not act offensively in our favor. When we are certain of their friendship, so far as to lie quiet, we shall march a strong detachment by land into the country, which we shall be masters of, if Mr. Carleton is not speedily reënforced. We had a little skirmish with the Indians;—two very good officers wounded and nine or ten privates killed; a good deal of confusion in the action; the Yorkers little acquainted with wood-fighting; the Connecticut men behaved well for the most part, but in the evening, when some shells were thrown from the fort, they showed a degree of *apprehension* that displeased me much; but I hope and believe it will wear off by a little practice. The general thought proper to remove a little farther off with the boats and vessels; and they embarked with such confusion as can only be palliated by saying they are young troops. I have endeavored to make them ashamed of themselves, and hope this won't happen again. I believe I am on a tolerable footing with them. Poor Schuyler is in so miserable a state of health as to make him an object of compassion.

"I wrote you from Crown Point, and also your worthy father. I then referred you to him for news. I must now beg of him to read this letter, which contains all I have to say, being much hurried. Should any report prevail at Albany of any accident having happened to me, I have requested Walter Livingston to send you this by express.

"Adieu! my dearest Janet. Rest assured of my warmest affection.

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

"CAMP NEAR ST. JOHNS,

"OCTOBER 6TH.

"MY DEAR JANET:—

"It is with inexpressible concern I find by a letter from your father that you are ill. I wish he had kept the intelli-

gence a secret; I do not want any addition to my uneasiness. That this may find you recovered is my warmest wish!

"Little change has happened since my last. I still wait for reinforcement; the troops have hitherto gone home sick, almost as fast as they came. We have been like half-drowned rats crawling thro' the swamp, but the weather is now much altered for the better, and I hope it will continue. I believe we shall in a few days set about our business in earnest. If powder don't fail us, I think we shall finish this affair. I have had overtures for an accommodation from St. Luke Le Come, and some other principal people of Montreal. He is a great villain and as cunning as the devil, but I have sent a *New Englander* to negotiate with him.

"Had we twice or thrice as many men, everything would long ago have been settled. All the lower class of people are anxious for our success, but have been intimidated much by our weakness, lest by a miscarriage they should be left to the vengeance of tyranny.

"I am extremely sorry to hear of your father's indisposition and your mother's, but hope most sincerely their health may by this time be reestablished. My affectionate duty attends them and also your grandfather.

"Farewell, my dear Janet; believe me ever yours,

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

"CAMP NEAR ST. JOHNS, OCTOBER 9TH.

"This evening I received my dear Janet's three letters to the 23rd September, which bring me the agreeable news of your recovery. I hope to have the same account of your good father and mother, whose health and happiness I think myself deeply interested in. You are certainly right: I most certainly might have advanced Harry to a majority. Disinterested and generous motives will forever, I hope, prevent me from serving myself or family at the expense of the public. Though a fine, spirited fellow, he has not experience for such an important post. I grant there are others as bad and worse—it is not my doing, nor will I ever have such a weight on my conscience. I always told you what I know to be a fact; I am unfit to deal with mankind in the bulk, for which reason I wish for retirement. I feel too sensibly the rascality, ignorance and selfishness so common among my fellow creatures to deal with them and keep my temper. I have been dragged from obscurity much against my inclination and not without some struggle, as you

well know; and depend upon it, the instant I can with decency slip my neck out of the yoke, I will return to my family and farm, and that peace of mind which I can't have in my present situation.

"General Schuyler may return in a few days. His return to Ticonderoga has been a most fortunate affair. We should most certainly have been obliged to return half-starved, and leave the unfortunate Canadians to take care of themselves. Providence does much for us and we little for ourselves!

"The negotiation with St. Luke ended in nothing. It is supposed the Governor had gotten some hint of it, and St. Luke, in order to acquit himself, made the Indian deliver my letter, which was an answer to his message, to the Governor, who ordered it to be burned without reading it. I suppose he was afraid of making a discovery which would have obliged him to treat St. Luke roughly. I anxiously wait to hear of the Kennebec expedition. If it succeed, it will be a great stroke; if we don't get more powder I am afraid this will be a tedious affair and that we shall be obliged to starve them out. You must not go into the house until I return. If you have a mind for Mrs. What-do-you-call-her—the Frenchwoman, keep her by all means. Harry is well, as are the two officers you mention. Willett has been ill. I answered Mr. Duane's letter. It went by an express to Philadelphia; he was at that time returned to York; do mention it when you write to Robert; I should be sorry to have him think me wanting in common politeness.

"The box arrived in good time. I am now sitting beside a very comfortable fire in my tent, and we have had for the first time some very pleasant weather.

"I am obliged to Shone for his good opinion, but alas! he is a very indifferent judge. At the forts I will not winter; it is possible I may be obliged to stay in Canada, but I shall certainly return if in my power.

"My affectionate good wishes and duty wait on your grandfather. My love to the girls.

"Adieu, my dear Janet; believe me

"Your truly affectionate

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

"MONTREAL, NOV. 13TH.

"MY DEAR JANET:—

"This morning the Bostonians have marched into town; the Governor, with his small garrison, having abandoned it two

nights since, and retired towards Quebec, where he will run some risk of being caught by Col. Arnold, who is arrived in that neighborhood.

"I am summoning all my virtue against the legion of females soliciting for husbands, brothers and sons taken prisoners.

"You may depend upon it, I will return home the instant I have put matters on such a footing as to be able to retire with propriety. I am very well, and very anxious to see you.

"Farewell, my dear Janet.

"Believe me yours, with real affection.

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

"MONTREAL, NOV. 24TH.

"MY DEAR JANET:—

"I wrote to you by Harry, and hope you have some days ago had the pleasure of seeing him. I long to see you in your new house. If the winter set in soon do n't forget to send for the lath to fence the garden, and also to have chestnut posts cut for the same purpose. I wish you could get a stove fixed in the hall—they are the most comfortable things imaginable.

"The other day General Prescott was so obliging as to surrender himself and fourteen or fifteen land officers, with above one hundred men, besides sea officers and sailors, prisoners of war. I blush for His Majesty's troops! Such an instance of base poltroonery I never met with! and all because we had half-a-dozen cannon on the bank of the river to annoy him in his retreat. The Governor escaped—more's the pity! Prescott, nevertheless, is a prize. He is a cruel rascal. I have treated him with the sovereign contempt his inhumanity and barbarity merit.

"To-morrow I hope to set out for Quebec, to join Col. Arnold, who is impatient to see us. His little army has undergone inexpressible hardships, and entered the country half-starved and half-naked. Should fortune continue her favor we may perhaps bring that business to a happy issue. In the meantime, adieu!

"Believe me most affect'ly your

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

"P. S.—I have no time to write to your father. I have been overwhelmed with business, and am out of all patience at being obliged to spend so much of this precious season in this town.

"My most affectionate respects attend the old gentleman and lady. My love to the girls. Do they go to town? No husbands this winter? Alas!

"I live in hopes to see you in six weeks."

"HOLLAND HOUSE,
"NEAR QUEBEC, DECEMBER 5TH.

"MY DEAR JANET:—

"This day I had the pleasure of yours of the 13th of October. I think your letters are a long time on the road. I believe I have now the right to complain, as I am sure you don't write so often as I do.

"I suppose long ere this we have furnished the folks of the United Colonies with subject-matter of conversation. I should like to see the long faces of my Tory friends. I fancy they look a little cast down, and that the Whig ladies triumph most unmercifully.

"The weather continues so gentle that we have been able, at this late season, to get down by water with our artillery, &c. They are a good deal alarmed in town, and with some reason. The garrison is little to be depended upon, and very weak in proportion to the extent of the works. I wish it were well over with all my heart, and sigh for home like a New Englander.

"I shan't forget your beaver blanket if I get safe out of this affair, nor your mother's martin-skins. Present my affectionate duty to her, and make her easy respecting Harry. He has by no means given me any offence, though some uneasiness by some little imprudences. I am glad to hear your house is in such forwardness. May I have the pleasure of seeing you in it soon!

"Till then, adieu!

"Believe me affectionately yours,

"RICHARD MONTGOMERY."

———So ends this short correspondence. The last letter is dated on the 5th of December. The brave and resolute Montgomery was destined to die on the last day of the same month.

The letters we have just perused not only give evidence of character throughout, but also show him to us genial, affectionate, and on occasion fond of a joke at home.

General Schuyler's health did not permit him to conduct this campaign as had been intended. He relinquished the command of the forces to General Mont-

gomery at Isle aux Noix. There was insubordination among the troops. Montgomery's energy and dauntless will were more than equal to the emergency. He had great trouble with the New Englanders, and wrote home: "They are the worst stuff imaginable for soldiers. They are homesick; their regiments are melted away and yet not a man dead of any distemper among them. There is such an equality among them that the officers have no authority, and there are few among them in whose spirit I have confidence; the privates are all generals but not soldiers, and so jealous that it is impossible, though a man risk his person, to escape the imputation of treachery."

The troops seemed thoroughly demoralized, the New Yorkers as well as the others. "O fortunate husband-men!" wrote Montgomery, "would I were at my plough again!" He was thoroughly disgusted with them all. However, his course through Canada was a triumphant one, and, notwithstanding all his difficulties, success followed in his footsteps. "I have courted fortune," he wrote in another letter, "and found her kind. I have one more favor to solicit and then I have done." The capture of Quebec would, he thought, complete the American possession of Canada, and make it a part of the Union. His rapid successes all over Canada had made him hopeful. "Fortune," he said, "favors the brave." Little had he then contemplated failure, or his own approaching end! In a conversation which he had with one of his aides-de-camp shortly before the storming of Quebec, he had indulged in meditations on his own life, and spoke of his loss of ambition, a sense of duty being alone left as his spring of action; he longed to return to the retirement of his country life, though he said he "would always be ready to contribute to the public safety, should the scene change and his services

be again required." He was convinced that there was, as he said, "a fair prospect of success"; and, notwithstanding the perils of his situation, his hopes ran high and his soul was undaunted. It was on the 31st of December, 1775, that the attack on Quebec was made. The little American army had undergone inexpressible hardships during the campaign; and the soldiers were half-starved and half-naked. General Montgomery had won the confidence of the men, and was greatly beloved by them, yet it took all his magnetic power to stir them into renewed exertion, disheartened as they were by fatigue. "Men of New York," he exclaimed, "you will not fear to follow where your General leads; march on!" Then, placing himself in the front, he almost immediately received the mortal wound which suddenly closed his career.

Thus fell Richard Montgomery, at the early age of thirty-seven. Young, gifted, and brave, he was mourned throughout the country, at whose altar he had offered up his life—apparently in vain; for his fate decided the battle in favor of the British.

Under the continued fire of the enemy, the inanimate form of Montgomery is said to have been borne from the field of battle by Aaron Burr. Through the courtesy of the British general, who greatly respected him, General Montgomery was buried with all the honors of war, within the walls of the city of Quebec.

General Montgomery's will had been made at Crown Point, on the 30th of August, soon after the commencement of his last campaign. The authenticity of this document is attested by the signature of Benedict Arnold. It is still in existence, and reads as follows:—

“THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF RICHARD
MONTGOMERY.

“I give to my sister, Lady Ranelagh, of the Kingdom of Ireland, all my personal fortune for her sole use, to be disposed of as she pleases, except such legacies as shall be hereafter mentioned. All my just debts must first be paid. Also, I give my said sister my estate at Kingsbridge, near New York, for her sole use, to be disposed of as she thinks fit. To my dear wife, Janet Montgomery, I give my furniture, farm utensils, carriages of all sorts, horses, cattle, shares, books, (to this, watch, mathematical and philosophical instruments and apparatus.)

“I also leave to my said wife the farm I purchased from Shaver at Rynbeck, with horses and everything upon it.

“The ample fortune which my wife will succeed to, makes it unnecessary to provide for her in a manner suitable to her situation in life and adequate to the warm affection I bear her.

“My dear sister’s large family want all I can spare. I could wish to recommend one or two of her younger children to my Janet’s protection.

“I must request the Honorable Robert Livingston, my much-honored father-in-law, and my brother-in-law, Robert, his son, (whose good sense and integrity I have all confidence in) to see this, my last Will and Testament, executed. Tho’ the hurry of public business and want of knowledge in the law may have rendered this instrument incorrect, yet I believe my intention is plain. I therefore hope no advantage will be taken of any inaccuracy.

“My brothers, whom I greatly esteem and respect, will accept of what alone I have in my power to give, my earnest wishes for their happiness!

“Witnesses: {	<i>Robert Walkin,</i> <i>Edward Mott,</i> <i>J. I. Tetard.</i>	[Signed]	RICHARD MONTGOMERY.
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“AUGUST 30TH, 1775,

“CROWN POINT.

“This may certify that the foregoing Will and Testament of the late General Montgomery, was found by us among his papers a few days after his Death, and immediately sealed up.

“BENEDICT ARNOLD,

“DONALD CAMPBELL.

[This is signed and written
in the handwriting of Arnold.]

The Will was proved and filed of record at the Surrogate's Office at Poughkeepsie, on the fourth day of August, 1781.

General Montgomery left no descendants. By his will it appears that he bequeathed the greater part of his fortune to his relatives in Ireland. The farm at Kingsbridge would now be of enormous value, from its close proximity to New York. It consisted of sixty-seven acres, and lay on the division-line between "the Yonkers and the Manor of Fordham." Fort Independence, with its appendages, having been erected upon it, the farm was, in a manner, ruined by the Continental army, during the Revolutionary War. The dwelling-house, barn and other outhouses were entirely demolished, and the orchard all cut down, as well as the whole of the forest. The fences were destroyed, and much of the surface of the soil pared off to make Fort Independence. The earth was also thrown up in various forms for that fortification and the redoubts around it. It is easy to imagine the devastation effected by the army in the whole neighborhood. As a farm it was useless, for some time at least. Had Montgomery lived he would have had much to do in restoring order from chaos. His own fortune had been principally invested in this farm at Kingsbridge. He was punctilious in the extreme in all money matters, and his remote accounts with his eldest brother, Alexander, prove him to have been always possessed of independent pecuniary resources. During the campaign in Canada his accounts were carefully kept at all times. A memorandum of the payments made by him up to the very day of his death was found among his papers. The following curious inventory of his effects was taken, and forwarded to New York. The greater part of his wardrobe was purchased by General Arnold:

- " An Inventory taken of the property & effects of the late General Montgomery on the 2d Day of January, A. D., 1776, at Holland House, in the presence of Col. Donald Campbell, Major F. Wissenfets, Major Matt. Ogden, Rev. John I. Tetard, and Mr. Aaron Burr, Aide-de-Camp.
- " One hundred & eleven dollars in Continental Bills.
- " Fifty shillings lawful money of Connecticut.
- " Sixteen shillings lawful money of the Province of Massachusetts.
- " A Bag containing forty-five receipts amounting to five thousand seven hundred and forty pounds, nine shillings and three-pence halfpenny, currency of New York.
- " In the same bag a string of white Wampum.
- " Forty-eight half-Johannes.
- " One-quarter of a Johannes.
- " Two light pistols.
- " Fifty half-Joes.
- " One hundred and ninety-three English shillings.
- " Six English half-crowns.
- " Twenty new Spanish Dollars.
- " Small money four shillings & 10 cents.

" £347.4.7

- " At opening a Black trunk, 3rd January, were present Col. Donald Campbell, Major John Brown, Major Fred. Weissenfelts, and Aaron Burr, Aide-de-camp.
- " 7 Ruffled shirts ; 3 sold to Gen. Arnold.
- " 6 Plain ditto, sold 4 at 8 dols., and 2 at 3 dols.
- " 10 Cambric stocks, 6 sold to General Arnold.
- " 6 Muslin neckcloths.
- " 1 Silk do. sold to General Arnold.
- " 9 pair silk stockings.
- " 3 pair thread do.
- " 3 pair woollen do,—1 pair to Dick, the negro boy.
- " 1 old pair socks.
- " 7 Linen and 2 Silk Hand's—3 linen sold to General Arnold.
- " 2 cotton caps.
- " 3 pair white breeches.
- " 2 white Holland waistcoats.
- " 2 pr. nankeen breeches.
- " 1 casimere waistcoat and breeches—sold to Gen'l Arnold.
- " 1 pair of elegant Indian leggins—sold to Gen'l Arnold.
- " 1 pair of Mocassins. do. do. do.

- " 1 old-white coat.
- " 1 pair Sheets—taken for Hospital.
- " 2 pillow-cases.
- " 1 pair of leather and two p'rs. of cloth shoes.
- " 2 pair silver buckles.
- " 1 Doz. knives and forks—sold to General Arnold.
- " 1 pair half-gaiters, with silver Buckles.
- " 1 pair Spurs.
- " 1 pair Gloves.
- " 1 brown watch coat.
- " 6 Silver table-spoons—sold to Gen. Arnold.
- " 6 do. tea-spoons.
- " 6 silver Tea-spoons and a pr. Tea-Tong, hired at Montreal—
Gen'l Arnold.
- " 5 Razors and Razor-strop.
- " 1 Comb-case, 1 Shaving Box, 1 crooked Tortoise-shell comb.
- " 1 mattress and 2 pillows.
- " 2 Blankets, 1 Counterpane—sold to Col. Warner.
- " 1 Buffalo skin. One clothes-brush—to Mr. Burr.
- " 1 small jacked Portmanteau (sent down with Maj. Ogden.)
- " 1 old trunk, 5 Table-cloths—to Gen. Arnold.

£19.8.6

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> " Books. " Saxe's <i>Reveries</i>. " <i>Polybius</i>, Vols. 1 & 2. " <i>Clarrac, L'Ingenieur de Campagne</i>. " <i>La Science Militaire</i>, Tour 3, 7, 8, & 10. " <i>Johnson's English Dictionary</i>. | { | <p>" Gen. Schuyler
authorized Col.
Ed. Autil to take
these and lodge
his receipt
for them."</p> |
|--|---|---|
-
- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> " [Signed] DONALD CAMPBELL, { <li style="padding-left: 40px;">" <i>Dep'ty Quarter M'r Gen'l.</i> { " MATT. OGDEN, " J. I. TETARD. | } | <p>FRED. WEISSENFELS, M. B.</p> |
|--|---|---------------------------------|

" At Col. Donald Campbell's request, Governor Carleton sent out of town the late General Montgomery's gold watch and seal, which Col. Campbell forwarded to Gen'l Wooster, at Montreal, by the hands of Messrs. Jeffries and Minott. Gen'l Wooster sent the watch by Lt. Col. Ritzma to New York, to Mrs. Montgomery."

Together with this inventory, an account was sent to Mrs. Montgomery of the manner in which his effects had been disposed of, and a list of the articles marked on the inventory as sold to Gen. Arnold.

To the south of Quebec the memorable Plains of Abraham extend themselves, recalling so forcibly the memory of past events that they cannot be viewed without emotion. The recollection of the acts of heroism that have distinguished these plains will kindle the fire of enthusiasm in the coldest heart. None can see with indifference the spot where Wolfe and Montgomery bled—where they fell, each one in turn a self-devoted victim to his country's cause. To the modern traveler this Gibraltar of America appears truly impregnable. Whatever difficulties present themselves in viewing the ground now, they are nothing to what they were in 1775. The perpendicular height of solid rock, to the top of which the eye can scarcely reach, is described as having seemed to threaten a row of miserable huts built directly at its foot. These huts formed one side of a narrow lane, running close beside the water's edge. This latter was the very path by which General Montgomery entered the Lower Town. It has been said that he knew the fortifications well, because he had been with Wolfe at the taking of Quebec. This is a mistake. He was in the British army, in Canada, during the French and Indian War, but not with Wolfe—having been ordered to follow General Amherst with his regiment. This error probably originated with the fact that Alexander Montgomery, the General's eldest brother, was with Wolfe at Quebec.

The difficulties which Arnold had to encounter in his attack on the northern side of the town were perhaps equal to those met by General Montgomery. The de-

file through which he marched was equally narrow, and nature had, in every respect, thrown more obstacles in his way. But he was more fortunate in that the guard who defended the field-post he attacked was completely surprised, and made little or no resistance. Had the fatal discharge which destroyed Montgomery's life been retarded but a few seconds he would have been under shelter of the enemy's works, and would not have been injured. In that case, the issue of the conflict would probably have been far different.

The following estimate of the British forces at Quebec is copied from a memorandum of General Montgomery's:—

“FORCES AT QUEBEC, DEC. 1775.

“ McLean's Emigrants,	200;
“ Fusiliers, (7th Reg't,)	60;
“ Seamen,	500;
“ British Militia,	300;
“ French Militia,	700.
“Total,	1,760.”

Formidable as the works were that surrounded the Upper Town, the garrison was not considered strong enough to have resisted the simultaneous attacks that would have been made from various directions, had Montgomery succeeded in effecting his junction with Arnold.

The body of General Montgomery remained in Quebec for forty-three years. It was then brought to New York City, in compliance with a special act of the Legislature. Reminiscences of Montgomery would be incomplete unless including a careful notice of the honors conferred on him by the State of New York, nearly half a century after his death: and the details,

as likely to be interesting and curious to our readers, are here subjoined :—

“AN ACT OF HONOR
“TO THE MEMORY OF
“GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY.

“Whereas, General Richard Montgomery, a citizen of this State, distinguished himself by his valor and patriotism among the earliest of the heroes of the Revolution, and was slain while in the act of gallantly leading the attack on Quebec; and, whereas, the remains of the said General Richard Montgomery are interred near the battle-ground undistinguished by any respectful mark; and whereas, a monument has been erected to his memory with others in St. Paul’s Church in the City of New York, by the Congress of the United States;—

“Therefore: Be it enacted by the people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, that the person administering the government of this State for the time being, be and is, hereby authorized to cause such measures to be taken as he shall deem expedient to obtain the consent of the Government of Canada, to the removal of the remains of General Richard Montgomery from Quebec to the City of New York, there to be deposited in St. Paul’s Church near the monument there erected to his memory; and that he shall cause such removal to be made, when such consent is obtained, at the expense of the State.”

A copy of the act was sent to the widow of Montgomery by Governor Clinton, accompanied by the following note :

“ALBANY, 4 MARCH, 1818.

“MADAM:—In the execution of the enclosed act, entitled ‘An Act of Honor to the Memory of General Richard Montgomery,’ it will afford me great pleasure to consult your feelings and wishes; and I shall esteem it a favor to be furnished by you with any intimations or references which may have a tendency to afford you gratification, to render due honor to the

memory of your illustrious husband, and to promote the views of the State, on this distinguished occasion.

“ With every sentiment of respect,

“ I have the honor to be

“ Your most devoted friend,

“ And obedient servant,

“ DEWITT CLINTON.”

At Mrs. Montgomery's request, Governor Clinton commissioned her nephew, Lewis Livingston, to superintend the removal of General Montgomery's remains to New York. From a minute report which he wrote to his father, Mr. Edward Livingston, then in Louisiana, we gather many details of interest hitherto unknown to the public. On account of the great lapse of time since the death of General Montgomery, apprehensions were entertained that there would be difficulty in ascertaining the exact spot where he was interred. Should the place of burial be known, it was even a matter of doubt whether any part of his remains would be found, as it was supposed they must long since have ceased to exist. Such apprehensions were, however, groundless. Shortly after the arrival of Col. Livingston in Quebec, an old man of eighty-nine years of age was pointed out to him, who had served in the British army, and was the very person who had been intrusted with the superintendence of the General's burial. As he still possessed all his faculties, Col. Livingston obtained from him every requisite information. Owing to the alteration that had taken place in the appearance of the ground, he could not indicate exactly where the body lay. It was found, however, within a few feet of the place he fixed upon; and there was so much circumstantial evidence to corroborate all he said, that not the slightest doubt could be entertained of his veracity. He mentioned a number of details respecting the in-

terment, and gave a particular description of the coffin in which the body was placed,—which corresponded perfectly with the appearance of the one taken up. This coffin, wonderful as it may appear, was still in a state of very good preservation, although it had been in the ground for over forty-two years. The pressure of the earth had broken in the lid, but the bottom and sides were nearly entire; the skeleton was also nearly entire; the skull was perfect, and also the thigh and hip bones; the ribs were the only parts that had entirely decayed.

The coffin was kept exactly in the state in which it was found, and placed in a strong wooden case. Sir John Sherbroke, then Governor of the Province of Quebec, was at this time extremely ill. He wrote, however, a very polite letter to Col. Livingston, expressing his regret that his state of health would not permit him to offer to a relative of the illustrious dead, such attentions as would otherwise have been paid. The course of action which he pursued was very liberal. He did not hesitate one instant to deliver up the remains; he only expressed a desire that the affair should be considered a private rather than a public transaction, probably because he would thereby incur less responsibility and avoid censure. Mr. William Smith, (the son of the Chief Justice then deceased,) was extremely useful in furthering the views of Col. Livingston; he was intimate with the Governor, and used his influence to obtain a compliance with the request of which he was the bearer.

Governor Clinton had directed the Adjutant General, with Colonel Van Rensselaer and a detachment of cavalry, to proceed to Whitehall to accompany the remains to New York, regulating the journey so as to reach Albany on the 4th of July. They left Whitehall on the

2d, arriving at Albany by the 4th. Great preparations had been made to receive the remains with all possible splendor and *éclat*. All the military were under arms and stationed about a mile from the city. On the arrival of the body and escort, they formed in front of the hearse and began the procession, which upon reaching the residence of the Patroon, General Van Rensselaer, was joined by an immense concourse of citizens. The pall-bearers consisted of old Revolutionary officers and members of the Society of the Cincinnati. The procession moved in this way through the principal streets of Albany, and stopped at the Capitol, where the remains were laid in state. In every village on the route similar honors, though on a smaller scale, had been paid to the memory of the gallant Montgomery. At Troy a reception had been conducted in nearly as brilliant a style as at Albany. The skeleton had been taken out of the box in which it was placed for safe conveyance, and placed in a magnificent coffin which had been sent on by the Governor.

All these ceremonies being over, Col. Livingston called on Governor Clinton, and gave him an account of his mission. The latter expressed himself satisfied, and informed Col. Livingston that he should, in conjunction with two of his aides-de-camp, proceed with the remains to New York, to have them placed in the City Hall, where the Society of Cincinnati would be prepared to receive them. On the 6th of July, at 9 o'clock in the morning, a procession, perhaps still larger than the first, formed at the Capitol and accompanied the coffin to the steamboat *Richmond*, on board of which it was put with a large military escort. The boat floated down for several miles under a discharge of minute-guns from both shores. It was astonishing to observe the strong sympathies which were everywhere evoked by

the arrival of these sacred remains. The degree of enthusiasm that prevailed and the patriotic feeling that evinced itself, reflected credit upon the State of New York ; and not a voice was heard in disapproval of the tributes of respect thus paid to the memory of this Hero of the Revolution.

Governor Clinton had informed Mrs. Montgomery that the body of the General would pass down the Hudson ; and by the aid of a glass she could see the boat pass Montgomery Place, her estate near Barrytown. We give her own quaint and touching terms, as she describes the mournful pageant in a letter to her niece. " At length," she wrote, " they came by, with all that remained of a beloved husband, who left me in the bloom of manhood, a perfect being. Alas ! how did he return ! However gratifying to my heart, yet to my feelings every pang I felt was renewed. The pomp with which it was conducted added to my woe ; when the steamboat passed with slow and solemn movement, stopping before my house, the troops under arms, the dead march from the muffled drum, the mournful music, the splendid coffin canopied with crape and crowned by plumes, you may conceive my anguish ; I cannot describe it. Such voluntary honors were never before paid to an individual by a republic, and to Governor Clinton's munificence much is owing."

At Mrs. Montgomery's own request she was left alone upon the porch when the *Richmond* went by. Forty-three years had elapsed since she parted with her husband at Saratoga. Emotions too agitating for her advanced years overcame her at this trying moment. She fainted ; and was found in this condition after the boat had passed on its way. Yet the first wish of her heart was realized, after years of deferred hope ; and she wrote to her brother in New Orleans, " I am satis-

fied. What more could I wish than the high honor that has been conferred on the ashes of my poor soldier."

The ceremonies in the city of New York were more brilliant than any of the same kind ever before witnessed there. The remains were landed at Fort Gansevoort, accompanied by a detachment of U. S. Infantry, from Albany. The coffin was received by the Governor's Guard, and escorted by the infantry and a troop of horse to the City Hall, where it was deposited until the day of the funeral. *The New York Daily Advertiser*, of July 8th, 1818, contains every detail of these interesting obsequies, the order of the procession as settled by the marshal of the day; also a picture of the coffin, a list of the aids and of the committee of arrangements. A guard of honor flanked the bier. It was recommended to the citizens to be silent during the solemnities of the day. Guns were fired from the Washington Navy Yard, from the Battery, and from the forts in the harbor; and minute-guns were fired until the funeral ceremonies ended. The bells of the different churches were tolled, and the flags in the harbor were at half-mast. The United States Infantry and a detachment of the Governor's Guards did duty night and day at the City Hall. The remains were finally interred on the morning of the 8th of July, 1818, beneath the monument in front of St. Paul's Church, which bears the following well-known inscription, from the pen of Franklin:

"This monument is erected by order of Congress, 25th January, 1776, to transmit to posterity a grateful remembrance of the patriotic conduct, enterprise and perseverance of Major-General Richard Montgomery, who after a series of successes, amidst the most discouraging difficulties, fell in the attack on Quebec, 31st December, 1775, aged 37 years."

Among the poetical productions of the Revolution is a school-piece entitled "The Death of Montgomery," published by John Trumbull, of Providence, in the year 1777. It is far from being uninteresting, although the poet's fancy has given Aaron Burr an excellence altogether ideal. Another curious poetical effusion of the times was a short political tract in which the Ghost of General Montgomery was introduced. This was published in 1776, as an appendix to the third issue of Paine's pamphlet on "Common Sense." Thus it appears that it may have been written by Paine, though it is not in either of the editions of his collected works. It is entitled: "A Dialogue between the Ghost of General Montgomery, just arrived from the Elysian Fields, and an American Delegate, in a wood near Philadelphia."

There are but few relics of General Montgomery in existence besides the papers we have alluded to, his public correspondence preserved at Washington, and his letters to General Schuyler. His watch and seal, removed from his person on the field of battle, were forwarded to Mrs. Montgomery, according to the directions of General Carleton, and are carefully preserved. A sword said to be his, and lately on exhibition at the Museum of Morrin College in Quebec, has been purchased and presented to the University of Virginia. The only original portrait of him is at Montgomery Place. It was sent to Mrs. Montgomery by Lady Ranelagh, after the death of the General, and represents him as a young man of about twenty-five years, the age at which he first left Ireland. The countenance is frank, gallant and handsome, and indicates a generous and amiable disposition.

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